Salvation – A Past, Present & Future Reality

Salvation is the central theme of the Bible, and indeed the very heart of the gospel. The promise of salvation is what stirs the heart of the new believer and continues to encourage Christians until the time they are called home. Salvation is a promise, a reality and a hope. Today I want to look at salvation as a past, present and future reality for every true believer.

Past

Those who are in Christ have already been saved. Ephesians 2:8-9 reads “For by grace you *have been saved* through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” As Christians we have assurance that we have already been saved.

Salvation in the past refers to two great acts of God – our justification and subsequent adoption into His family. In justifying us, God declares that the requirements of holiness required by the law have been satisfied on our behalf.

The righteousness of Jesus is imputed to us so that God declares we are innocent. In this way we are saved from the damnation we so richly deserve.

Adoption is the declaration of God whereby those who have been justified are declared to be His children. They are adopted in His family and become heirs to the riches Christ gained for us. While this is a past reality, it looks to the future for its fulfillment.

So how does this apply to the lives of Christians today? Salvation as a past reality frees us from the power of guilt for sin which so often seeks to enslave us. We have assurance that the act of salvation is in our past, and when we were saved the guilt for our sin was transferred to Christ's account. This empowers us to live lives which are unburdened by guilt, freeing us to look to the present and the future.

Present

Those who are in Christ continue to experience salvation. In 1 Corinthians 1:18 we read "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who *are being saved* it is the power of God." The process of salvation is ongoing so that it is a present reality as much as it is a past reality.

Salvation in the present refers to two more great promises of God – sanctification and perseverance. Sanctification is a process that is ongoing in the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit indwells us at the moment of salvation and begins to affect change in our lives so that we become more and more conformed to the image of holiness modeled in Christ. As we allow the Spirit to lead and guide us, we grow in grace.

The present reality of salvation also promises perseverance so we can have full confidence that we will continue as believers to the end. We do not need to worry about losing the salvation which God granted to us, for He continues to grant it to us on a continual basis.

Salvation, then, in its present reality, allows us to slowly but continually be freed from the power of sin. Having been once-for-all declared right in God's eyes, we have been freed from our guilt and now can begin to be freed from sin's power.

Future

Believers in Christ will experience salvation in the future. Romans 5:9 tells us that "having now been justified by His blood, we *shall be saved* from wrath through

Him.” More than just the past and present, salvation points forward to the future.

Salvation’s future reality points forward to our upcoming glorification. Glorification is a future work of God in which the dead will be raised and in new bodies will be ushered finally into the kingdom of heaven. Our bodies will be freed from all of sin’s corruption. In Romans 8:23 Paul calls this the “redemption of the body.”

The future reality of salvation is that we can look forward to being freed from sin’s presence. Having been delivered from the guilt of our sin and having progressively been delivered from sin’s power, we can look forward with great anticipation to the cessation of sin’s presence in our lives.

Conclusion

Praise God for the act of salvation he has accomplished in the life of every believer, the act which has delivered us from the power of guilt and which has erased our guilt in His eyes.

Praise God for his ongoing salvation, whereby He gives us His authority so we can overcome the power of sin.

Praise God for the promise of salvation which allows us to look forward with eager anticipation to the time when we will finally be freed from sin’s presence.

Praise God for salvation!

-

[Truths That Take on the World]

Christianity has a long history with catechisms—summaries of key doctrines that are arranged in a question-and-answer format. Traditionally, Presbyterians would be taught The Shorter Catechism, Dutch Reformed believers The Heidelberg Catechism, and Baptists one of the Baptist